Competent Authority to decide MSP for Cotton

472. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the name of competent authority to decide Minimum Support Price for cotton;

(b) the essential quantity of cotton that would be procured by Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) and other Government agencies during the next one year; and

(c) whether Government have any proposal to revise the import duty on Cotton and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The Government decides the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for various agricultural commodities, including cotton, taking into account the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP), the views of the State Governments and the concerned Central Ministries as well as such other relevant factors, which in the opinion of the Government, are important for fixation of MSPs.

(b) The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) has commenced MSP operations in all cotton growing States. As on February 28, 2005 the CCI has purchased 122.26 lakh quintals of kapas (equivalent to 23.75 lakh lint bales) under MSP operations. According to the information furnished by the CCI, procurement under MSP operations may be in the range of 28 to 30 lakh lint bales during 2004-05 cotton season (October 2004—September 2005). As regards 2005-06 season, the CCI has indicated that it is too early to make an assessment of the quantity of cotton to be procured by them. In Maharashtra, the Maharashtra State Cooperative Cotton Growers Marketing Federation (MSCCGMF), under the Monopoly Procurement Scheme of the State Government has purchased kapas at guaranteed prices, which are higher than the MSP. The MSCCGMF has so far purchased 38.40 lakh lint bales under the Monopoly Procurement Scheme in the State. Keeping in view the need to avoid distress sale by cotton farmers, recently the Government have declared National Agricultural Cooperative marketing Federation of India Limited (NAFED) as an agency to undertake cotton procurement, in addition to CCI. However, it is too early to make assessment of the quantity likely to be procured by NAFED.

(c) The current rate of import duty on cotton is 10 per cent. The import duty on cotton is decided on the basis of the need to protect domestic producers and also to make available raw material to users at reasonable prices.

Testing of Coca Cola as pesticide

†473. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 844 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 10th December, 2004 and state:

(a) whether Government have carried out any scientific tests with regard to spraying coca cola and pepsi on crops to kill harmful insects to ascertain as to what extent such spraying is successful on crops, and

(b) if not, the reasons for not carrying out scientific tests on such spraying and the reasons for delay in the said tests?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Scientists of the Agriculture Department of the Government of Andhra Pradesh have advised the farmers against spraying of crops with cola drinks since would neither be economical nor useful. Hence no scientific tests/trials were carried out in this regard.

Withdrawal of Insurance Schemes

†474. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to withdraw crops Insurance Scheme and National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (N.A.I.S.) 'Farm Income Insurance Scheme', 'Rain Insurance Scheme' etc;

(b) if so, the reasons for withdrawing the same;

(c) if not, whether these schemes are being amended; and

(d) if so, the details of the proposed amendments?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.